

We Explain It: Winds Blew In New U-2 Affair

High over the northern Pacific, a tiny U. S. plane apparently buffeted by fierce winds, streaked over an island. In that flight—9 minutes over the territory—a grave international incident was in the making. The plane: An American U-2, the type that fell into Soviet hands in May, 1960, with its pilot, Capt. Francis Gary Powers. The island: Sakhalin, run by the Soviet Union.

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WASHINGTON.

The United States said yesterday that "severe winds" may have caused a U-2 plane unintentionally to violate Soviet territory last Thursday.

The new U-2 incident hit Washington like a thunder-clap. In May, 1960, a U-2 spy plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers was captured by the

Russians. The Big Four Summit meeting collapsed in the wake of the furor it caused. President Eisenhower's trip to the Soviet Union was canceled and the United States announced it would halt any and all flights over Russian territory.

Yesterday, the State Department, in a note personally approved by President Kennedy, said that the ban on deliberate overflights of the Soviet Union "has in no way been altered." The department would not reveal the U-2's mission or where it was based.

Four-and-a-half hours after Moscow protested the "gross violation" of its frontier by a U-2 allegedly flying over Soviet-held Sakhalin Island, north of Japan, State Department press officer Joseph W. Reap read the U. S. note of reply to newsmen at a crowded news conference.

The U. S. note said "Precautions intended to prevent such incidents are under review." State department officials called the note a reply rather than an "apology."

What the U. S. Said

The U. S. note did not definitely say that the U-2 had overflown Soviet territory.

Administration as a "cover" while declining to say whether the plane carried a camera. The State Department official did note that it was a night flight.

White House Silent

The White House—undoubtedly recalling the welter of U. S. statements issued after the Powers affair in 1960—maintained a tight-lipped silence. Presidential Press Secretary Jerre Salinger referred all inquiries to the State Department.

The Air Force has, since the U-2 incident of 1960, announced it is using the planes for three purposes—"weather" studies, "high-altitude sampling" to measure atomic fallout, and—in this country—to measure "infra-red radiation by ballistic missiles."

The United States has never said whether it continues to use the U-2 for photo reconnaissance in areas other than over the Soviet Union.

Asked whether the plane is still used for photo reconnaissance missions, an Air Force spokesman yesterday listed the three purposes for which the plane is being used and added: "There is no indication of any other mission as far as the Air Force is concerned."

Two Differences

There were two major differences between the U-2 incident of 1962 and the Powers episode. The United States at first denied that the Powers U-2 was on an espionage mission. Then Soviet Premier Khrushchev revealed he had the pilot and the plane, which he said was downed by a Soviet rocket over Sverdlovsk, in the Ural Mountains.

Forced into a corner by Mr. Khrushchev, the U. S. finally admitted the plane was on a spy flight.

Yesterday, the Kennedy administration, benefiting from the 1960 experience, did not seek to deny the Soviet charge—it simply avoided getting into the question of whether the plane was spying or what it was doing up there.

And there was a second big difference: Since State Department officials said the plane had returned safely and that the pilot had reported on what happened, it was apparent that this time the Russians did not have the plane and its pilot.

Consequently, Moscow was in a weak position to prove the plane's mission, or to disprove the United States reply.

It was noted here that the Soviet note did not flatly charge that the U-2 was on a spy mission, it simply asked for a "clear answer" to whether "piratical" flights had been revived.

Presidential Pledge

announced May 16, 1960, in Paris, where he had gone to meet at the summit that flights over Soviet territory had been called off and would not be resumed. On Jan. 25, 1961, just after he took office, President Kennedy repeated the pledge.

At the time, he said "Flights of American aircraft penetrating the air space of the Soviet Union have been suspended since May 1960. I have ordered that they not be resumed."

The U. S. note was delivered in Moscow soon after Mr. Reap read it to newsmen.

The Soviet note claimed that the U-2 were flying out of Japan, Turkey and West Germany. The State Department official said there are no U-2s in Japan. In Wiesbaden, Germany, UPI quoted a U. S. Air Force spokesman as denying that U-2 planes were flying from Turkey or West Germany.

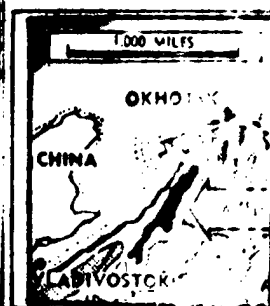
An Air Force spokesman here refused to confirm or deny the report of what the Air Force allegedly said in Wiesbaden. Neither the State Department nor the Air Force spokesman at the Pentagon would say whether there are U-2 planes in Turkey or West Germany. Neither would say where U-2 aircraft are based at present.

In Britain, Okinawa

However, the Air Ministry in London announced that U-2 planes had arrived in Britain Aug. 19 to carry out what the Air Force here called "atmospheric sampling and high-altitude research." It is also known that U-2 planes are based at Okinawa.

Since the 1960 U-2 affair, the Air Force has announced the dispatch of U-2 planes to Australia, the Philippines, Alaska, Argentina and Britain for what it termed high-altitude atomic sampling and weather research.

Mr. Kennedy learned of the Soviet charge soon after his Air Force jet landed at Andrews Air Force Base at 9:56 a. m. on a flight from Quonset Naval Air Station, R. I. The President spent the Labor Day week end at Newport, R. I.



OUT OF BOUNDS
Sakhalin Island, Japan